R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 013 236 SP 001 258

TEACHER ATTITUDE TOWARD EVALUATION.
BY- WAGONER, RODERIC L. O'HANLON, JAMES F.
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.48 12P.

DESCRIPTORS- COMPETITIVE SELECTION, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, INCENTIVE SYSTEMS, MERIT RATING PROGRAMS, SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS, *SELF EVALUATION, SEX DIFFERENCES, TABLES (DATA), *TEACHER ATTITUDES, *TEACHER EVALUATION, *TENURE,

TO IDENTIFY FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD EVALUATION (OF TEACHERS), A 7-ITEM ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE, CALLING FOR YES-NO RESPONSES TO EXPRESSIONS OF PRESENT AND IDEAL PRACTICES, WAS SENT TO 800 RANDOMLY SELECTED ARIZONA PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS. THE 534 RESPONDENTS WERE CATEGORIZED IN SIX WAYS--(1) WHETHER THEY RATED THEMSELVES AS "BETTER THAN" OR "BELOW" AVERAGE TEACHERS, (2) TENURED AGAINST NONTENURED TEACHERS, (3) MEN AGAINST WOMEN, (4) FEMALE ELEMENTARY AGAINST FEMALE SECONDARY TEACHERS, (5) FEMALE SECONDARY AGAINST MALE SECONDARY TEACHERS, AND (6) THOSE IN MERIT PAY AGAINST NONMERIT PAY SCHOOL DISTRICTS. AS HYPOTHESIZED, (A) BETTER THAN AVERAGE AND (B) NONTENURED TEACHERS SHOWED SIGNIFICANTLY MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD EVALUATION. ALL OTHER DIFFERENCES WERE IN THE HYPOTHESIZED DIRECTION, BUT NOT SIGNIFICANTLY SO--(C) MEN, (D) FEMALE SECONDARY, AS CONTRASTED WITH ELEMENTARY, TEACHERS, (E) FEMALE, OVER MALE, SECONDARY TEACHERS, AND (F) MERIT PAY TEACHERS SHOWED BETTER ATTITUDES. SUBSIDIARY ANALYSES SHOWED NO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY TEACHERS AND GOOD AGREEMENT BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARD PRESENT AND IDEAL PRACTICES. THE FINDINGS SHOW THAT--(1) "THOSE WHO CAN SEE A POSSIBLE REWARD FROM EVALUATION OF THEIR TEACHING AND WHO WISH TO COMPETE FOR THIS REWARD" FAVOR EVALUATION, (11) ATTITUDES TOWARD EVALUATION ARE PREDICTABLE, AND (III) A FEELING OF THREAT IS NOT A NECESSARY CONSEQUENCE OF EVALUATION. (AF)

1258

ED013236

SEP 25 1967

Copy X

R 600

TEACHER ATTITUDE TOWARD EVALUATION

Roderic L. Wagoner
Assistant Professor of Secondary Education
Ohio University

and

James P. O'Hanlon
Assistant Professor of Secondary Education
University of Nebraska

The attitude of teachers toward evaluation of their teaching performance will in some way influence their capability to profit from such evaluation, those holding favorable attitudes toward the idea of evaluation being more likely to profit than those holding less favorable or unfavorable attitudes. Evaluation, as used here, is defined as the assigning of a value to the measured behaviors of a teacher, this measuring and valuing being done by supervisory personnel (as opposed to self-evaluation). Theoretically, evaluation should lead to upgrading the teachers being evaluated through a process of the supervision making them more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, knowledge which they will then use to improve their work. If evaluation does play this role in the process of improving teaching performance, the teacher's attitude toward evaluation is of significance. Evaluation is, of course, also used for the purpose of determining whether teachers will be re-employed. All teachers, therefore, even though they may work in schools where evaluation is not used as a means for improving teaching competence, have experienced evaluation of their teaching.

If supervisors are to be effective in evaluating teachers for the purpose of stimulating improved teaching performance, it may be that they will need to approach those with negative attitudes toward evaluation in a manner different from the way they approach those with positive attitudes. Identifying easily discernible factors which are associated with attitude toward evaluation would then help the evaluator decide how to proceed in his work with teachers. Accordingly the question is raised: Which teachers favor and which oppose evaluation? The study reported here was undertaken to search for factors which are associated with teacher attitude toward evaluation.

Threat or Challenge; Competition

Possible reactions to evaluation may be said to fall along a continuum ranging from threat, a negative reaction, to challenge, a positive reaction. Teachers who perceive evaluation as a threat are assumed to feel that the consequences of evaluation will most likely be punishing or unpleasant to them in some manner and/or that they have nothing to gain from evaluation. On the other hand, teachers who perceive evaluation as a challenge either believe that evaluation has potential for reward for them or can definitely see the prospect of such reward. A further assumption is that teachers who can be described as not wishing to compete will be negative towards evaluation--for evaluation necessarily implies competition of some kind--while those who can be described as competitive will be favorable.

This study attempted to determine whether teachers could be divided into groups on the basis of easily discernible factors assumed to be related to the threat-non competitive/challenge-competitive construct and

thus which would differ in attitude towards evaluation. The following comparisions of groups were made:

(1) Teachers who rated themselves as "better than average teachers" against teachers who rated themselves as "average" or "below average." It was hypothesized that the "better" group would be the more favorable toward evaluation because these teachers would perceive evaluation as being potentially rewarding to them (their excellence would be recognized) while the "average" and "below average" teachers would perceive evaluation as either holding no reward for them or being punishing to them (their weakness would be recognized).

(2) Teachers not on tenure against teachers on tenure. Those not on tenure were hypothesized to be more favorable toward evaluation because evaluation presented an expected reward -- i.e., tenure -- to them while the tenured teacher had no expectation of a reward.

(3) Men teachers against women teachers. Men teachers were hypothesized to be more favorable to competition and thus evaluation on the assumption that in the American culture men are more competitive employees.

(4) Female secondary teachers against female elementary teachers. The female secondary teacher has in a sense entered a man's world and was thus hypothesized to be a more competitive person than those who enter the female-dominated elementary field.

(5) Female secondary teachers against male secondary teachers. As previously stated, the female secondary teacher was assumed to be competitive; for a man, however, becoming a secondary teacher is entering a less competitive field than most other fields entered by men of

comparable education. Female secondary teachers were thus hypothesized to have more favorable attitudes towards evaluation.

(6) Teachers in districts which utilize merit pay plans against teachers in districts without such plans. Teachers in merit pay districts are in a position to obtain a reward through evaluation which is not available to teachers in other districts. In addition, they have chosen to teach in districts where competition through evaluation is present. Therefore, teachers in merit pay districts were hypothesized as more favorable.

To test whether these groups held attitudes toward evaluation which were different in the direction hypothesized, an attitude questionnaire was developed and sent to 800 randomly-selected Arizona public school teachers, representing slightly more than 5% of the state's teacher population. Arizona was chosen for this study in part because of its mandatory tenure law and because it included a fairly diversified population of schools in terms of school and community size. A return of approximately 75% of the questionnaires was accomplished with 534 being usable for analysis (some were eliminated because the teachers had not responded to every item).

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part requested information from the teachers which would make it possible to place them into the groups or categories being studied. The second section was designed to provide a measure of the teacher's attitude toward evaluation. This section was developed through the panel of experts technique and was tested in a small pilot study. Seven questions were used to assess

attitude toward evaluation. It was believed that the use of several questions rather than one would result in a more valid measurement of the teacher's attitude. These questions were constructed so as to obtain a response from the teacher relative to his feelings about evaluation applied to others, evaluation applied to himself, present practices of evaluation, and ideal practices. The following are the questions:

1. Is evaluation an effective means of improving the competence of a teacher?

2. Are evaluations of teachers' competence accurate?

3. Is evaluation an effective means of eliminating incompetent teachers?

4. Should teachers be paid according to their competence as determined by evaluation?

5. Should your teaching be evaluated each year?

6. Should your re-employment depend upon evaluation?

7. Is it possible to evaluate accurately a teacher's competence?

There were two possible responses to each of these seven questions: "Yes, in most cases" and "No, in most cases." "Yes" responses were scored as ones and "no" responses as zeroes. On this basis a score was determined for each teacher, a score of seven indicating the most favorable attitude toward evaluation and one of zero the least favorable attitude. The analysis of variance statistical technique was used to compare the responses of the different groups to the attitude questions. Table I presents the results of these analyses.

Table I. A Comparison of Attitude Toward Evaluation Scores of Selected Groups of Teachers

Groups	Mean Scores	F (1,70 df)
Self-rating of "better than average"	3.60	4.657 <.05
Self-rating of "average" or "below average"	3.15	
Teachers not on tenure	3.84	12.015 <.01
Teachers on tenure	3.08	
Male teachers	3.34	.039 (n.s.)
Female teachers	3.30	
Female secondary teachers	3.47	.434 (n.s.)
Female elementary teachers	3.25	
Female secondary teachers	3.47	.875 (n.s.)
Male secondary teachers	3.22	
Teachers in merit pay districts	4.87	*
Teachers in districts without merit pay	3.29	

*F test was not possible because of small number of teachers employed in merit pay districts.

Discussion of Results

Although the difference between groups was found to be statistically significant in only two of the comparisons, the difference was in the direction hypothesized in each case. The explanation of those holding favorable attitudes toward evaluation as being those who can see a possible reward from evaluation of their teaching and who wish to compete for this reward thus receives some support.

Several factors besides the possibility of reward may have contributed to the rather large difference between the tenured and non-tenured

groups. The non-tenured teachers are most likely younger and thus may be more energetic and idealistic than they will be later in their careers after they are tenured. Or perhaps they represent a new young breed who have points of view toward teaching which are different from those of the established tenured teachers. It is also possible that the obtaining of tenure does create in a teacher the feeling that he is in a sense above evaluation; that he should not be put on trial in any way to demonstrate his competence.

The difference between those who rated themselves as "better than average" teachers and the other teachers is more to be expected than that between the tenured and non-tenured. Perhaps at least some of those who are severe critics of evaluation and say that it can not be done in a valid manner are really those who have already evaluated their own teaching performance as not of high quality. It appears that those who perceive themselves to be strong teachers do not have as great a fear of the inaccuracies of evaluation.

Because tenure and self-evaluation both seemed related to attitude toward evaluation, a further analysis was made comparing groups established by combining these factors. No significant difference was found in the attitude scores of teacher not on tenure who rated themselves as "better than average" and those who rated themselves as "average" or "below average" teachers. Both of these two subgroups of teachers not on tenure were more favorable toward evaluation than the two similar subgroups of tenured teachers. The attitude toward evaluation of teachers on tenure who rated themselves as "better" was found to be significantly (.05 level) more favorable than that of those on tenure who rated

themselves as "average" or "below average." The subgroup which had the least favorable attitude toward evaluation was thus the on tenure "average" and "below average" self-rating subgroup. This subgroup would certainly be made up of individuals who could see the least possibility of reward for them as the result of evaluation; some may have even tended to underrate themselves as a result of negative feelings toward competition.

Several other analyses of the data gathered in this study were made in addition to the testing of the previously stated hypotheses. Attitude toward evaluation of elementary and secondary teachers was compared and found to be the same for all practical purposes (mean score differed by .011). A check was made to determine if attitude toward present practices (1, 2, and 3 on the questionnaire) and attitude toward ideal practices (5, 6, and 7 on the questionnaire) were the same. A Spearman Brown reliability coefficient of .75 was found between the score for present practices and the score for ideal practices via the one way repeated measures design. Analysis of variance tests comparing the six sets of groups originally tested revealed basically the same levels of difference whether the groups were contrasted on attitude toward present practices, on attitude toward ideal practices, or on attitude toward evaluation (all seven questions).

In some ways the question (#4) "Should teachers be paid according to their competence as determined by evaluation" was the most severe test of a teacher's attitude toward evaluation. To be favorable toward merit pay requires much faith in the evaluation process. Comparison of

the six sets of groups on their responses to this question alone revealed greater differences (Chi-square test) than were found for comparisons based on the total questionnaire, all of the results being in the hypothesized direction.

That teachers are divided in and/or undecided about their opinions concerning evaluation is evident from the mean score for the total group which is slightly less than 3.5, the mid-score on the continuum. While a positive attitude does not exist, this represents perhaps a less negative attitude than is sometimes assumed. It is often assumed also that those teachers who are likely to be the most effected by evaluation (e.g., not on temure, under merit pay) will be most threatened by it and hostile toward it. The evidence presented here does not support that observation but rather supports the view that a feeling of threat is not necessarily a result of the evaluation having a consequence for the teacher being evaluated.

Implications

Major implications of this study are: (1) It is possible to identify groups of teachers on the basis of easily discernible factors which hold attitudes toward evaluation which are different from other groups in a predictable direction. While there will undoubtedly be considerable differences in attitude among the individuals within a group, further refinement of this approach may provide a tool for the supervisor to use in formulating his technique for working with various teachers. (2) Teachers who can see the possibility of gaining some reward through evaluation are more favorable towards it and thus are assumed to be more likely to improve

their teaching because of it. If this be so, what is needed may well be more "stakes" for the teacher in the evaluation process, not a removal of any reward possibility.

The authors wish to thank Dr. William Rodgers of the Center for Educational Research and Service, College of Education, Ohio University, for his assistance in the statistical treatment of the data collected in this study.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.